

## Message Text

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ORIGIN OC-06

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 ISO-00 AID-20 /027 R

66631

DRAFTED BY:A/OC-NEA:GJGENDRON

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R 251853Z SEP 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUESBE/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0847

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 190581

BEIRUT FOR RCO; NEW DELHI FOR ATO

FOL TEL SENT ACTION STATE FROM KABUL 25 SEP 73

REPEATED TO YOU

QTE C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 6924

AIDAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: EMBASSY/USAID RADIO NETWORKS

SUMMARY: CHARGE AND USAID DIRECTOR MET WITH MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (ENG. ABDUL HAMEED) AND ENGINEER ZAMAN CONCERNING THE KABUL/KHANDAHAR/LASHKAR GAH/KAJAKAI SINGLE SIDE BAND NETWORK (SSB) AND THE LOCAL KABUL VHF NETWORK. MINISTER REQUESTED OPENING OF TECHNICAL TALKS WITH U.S. MISSION STAFF ON USE OF SSB AND VHF NETWORKS, SO THAT FINAL DECISION OF GOA RE USE MAY BE TAKEN. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION MINISTER AGREED LEAVE KABUL/ KHANDAHAR/LASH/KAJAKAI SSB IN OPERATION, PENDING OUTCOME OF TALKS, AND REQUESTED VHF FOR KABUL NOT BE USED EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES. ACTION REQUESTED: NONE. END SUMMARY.

1. CHARGE OPENED MEETING BY EXPLAINING BRIEFLY PURPOSE OF TWO NETWORKS. ENGINEER ZAMAN ACTED AS INTERPRETER BUT MINISTER DID  
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SPEAK A FEW WORDS OF ENGLISH DURING OPENING AMENITIES. ENGINEER

ZAMAN DID MOST OF TALKING AND APPEARED WELL BRIEFED ON KIND OF EQUIPMENT AT DISPOSAL OF EMBASSY/USAID.

2. HE ASKED REPEATEDLY IF USAID OR EMBASSY HAD ANY WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM PAST GOVERNMENTS. HE STRESSED THAT MINISTRY HAD NO WRITTEN RECORD OF HAVING ASSIGNED FREQUENCIES TO USAID FOR LASH LINK. WE POINTED OUT THAT SSB LINK HAD BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1959 WITH ORAL APPROVAL OF GOA WITH NO PAST DIFFICULTIES. HOWEVER, WE AGREED THAT NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME TO FORMALIZE ARRANGEMENTS IN WRITING IF MINISTRY WISHED TO DO SO.

3. ZAMAN WITH MINISTER'S CONCURRENCE PROPOSED THAT TECHNICAL WORKING PARTY WITH U.S. MISSION STAFF BE FORMED IMMEDIATELY TO EXAMINE TWO NETWORKS SO THAT GOA COULD MAKE ITS DECISION REGARDING THEIR USE BY EMBASSY AND USAID. MINISTER THEN SUGGESTED THAT NETWORKS BE CLOSED DOWN PENDING GOA FINAL DECISION. WHEN CHARGE OBJECTED THAT CLOSE DOWN WOULD CREATE SERIOUS (COMMUNICATIONS, SECURITY, AND MEDICAL) DIFFICULTIES IN TERMS OF KAJAKAI HYDRO PROJECT AND THE HELMAND VALLEY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GROUP, IT WAS AGREED TO ALLOW THE SSB NETWORK TO CONTINUE PENDING RESULTS JOINT USG/GOA REVIEW. REGARDING THE KABUL VHF NET IT WAS AGREED TO LEAVE IT OPERATIONAL ON THE CONDITION THAT IT WAS USED ONLY FOR EMERGENCIES (I.E., SECURITY OF CHARGE/AMBASSADOR, FIRES, URGENT MEDICAL REASONS). TECHNICAL NEGOTIATIONS WILL BEGIN IN NEXT DAY OR TWO WITH ENGINEER ZAMAN AT MINISTRY COMMUNICATIONS. WILL ADVISE OUTCOME. (INFORMAL UNOFFICIAL PAPERS WERE LEFT SUMMARIZING THE GENESIS USE AND NEED FOR THE TWO NETWORKS.)

4. IN CLOSING MEETING CHARGE AND USAID DIRECTOR STRESSED POINT THAT REVIEW WITH GOA SHOULD CONSIDER ALL FACTORS (HEALTH, SECURITY, MORALE OF PERSONNEL AT ISOLATED POST IN VALLEY, ETC.) AND DECISION SHOULD NOT BE MADE PURELY ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS OF TYPE EQUIPMENT, WATTAGE ASSIGNED FREQUENCIES. MINISTER AND ENG. ZAMAN AGREED THAT ALL SUCH FACTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN MAKING GOA'S FINAL DECISION.

COMMENT: WHILE MEETING WAS STIFF AND FORMAL, IT WAS COMPLETELY CORRECT AND POLITE. MINISTER AND ESPECIALLY ENGINEER ZAMAN WERE FORCEFUL IN ASSERTING ROLE OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS IN CONTROLLING RADIO TRANSMISSION. DETERMINATION TO LIMIT FOREIGN CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMUNICATION CAPABILITY (BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY) BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS WAS MADE CLEAR. APART FROM STATED CONCERN OVER LACK OF WRITTEN RECORD, ENGINEER ZAMAN SEEMED PARTICULARLY CONCERNED OVER SIZE OF KHANDAHAR AND LASHKAR GAH RADIO TRANSMITTERS WHICH ARE 300 WATTS, AND PROVIDE "OUT OF COUNTRY" TRANSMISSION.

WHILE WE ARE HOPEFUL THIS PROBLEM WILL SORT ITSELF OUT SOON, WE ARE NOT PARTICULARLY OPTIMISTIC, NOR PESSIMISTIC. IT IS

DIFFICULT TO PREDICT FINAL OUTCOME AT THIS JUNCTURE.  
LEWIS UNQTE RUSH

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